



**CALIFORNIA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**ITEM #** 3

**JANUARY 2004 AGENDA**

SUBJECT California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE): Including, but not limited to, the Presentation of the CAHSEE Report to the Legislature.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Action</b>
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Information</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Public Hearing</b>

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**Recommendation:**

The following item is provided to the State Board of Education for information and action as deemed necessary and appropriate.

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**Summary of Previous State Board of Education Discussion and Action**

Senate Bill (SB) 2X (passed in 1999) authorized the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE) and specified an independent evaluation of the CAHSEE. The *Independent Evaluation of the California High School Exit Examination: Year 4 Evaluation Report* was presented to the State Board of Education (SBE) in November 2003 as an information item.

Assembly Bill (AB) 1609 (passed in 2001) required an additional evaluation and report of the CAHSEE. The *Independent Evaluation of the California High School Exit Examination: AB 1609 Study Report* was presented to SBE in May 2003 as an information item.

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**Summary of Key Issue(s)**

California Education Code section 60855 requires that the CAHSEE independent evaluator submit a report to the Governor of California, the Office of the Legislative Analyst, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, the State Board of Education, the Secretary for Education, and the Chairs of the Education Policy Committees in both houses of the California Legislature by February 1, 2004, of even-numbered years.

The February 2004 report will incorporate both the CAHSEE Year 4 Evaluation Report to the California Department of Education and the Assembly Bill (AB) 1609 Study Report. The contractor for the independent evaluation, Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO), will present the major points of the February 2004 report to the SBE at the January meeting.

### **Summary of Key Issue(s)**

Major findings from the AB 1609 study and the Year 4 Evaluation Report include the following:

1. The development of CAHSEE meets all of the test standards for use as a graduation requirement.
2. The CAHSEE requirement has been a major factor leading to dramatically increased coverage of the California Content Standards at both the high school and middle school levels, and to development or improvement of courses providing help for students who have difficulty mastering these standards.
3. Available evidence indicates that many courses of initial instruction and remedial courses have only limited effectiveness in helping students master the required standards.
4. Many factors suggest that the effectiveness of standards-based instruction will improve for each succeeding class after the Class of 2004, but the speed with which passing rates will improve is currently unknown.
5. Precise comparisons are not possible between the Classes of 2004 and 2005 because California does not yet have individual student identifiers. Additionally, the Class of 2004 began taking the test as ninth graders, and the Class of 2005 first took the test as tenth graders. Passing rates for students in the Class of 2005 (March and May) were slightly lower than passing rates for students in the Class of 2004 (end of tenth grade).
6. Schools are continuing efforts to ensure that the content standards are covered in instruction and to provide support for students who need additional help in mastering these standards. Many programs that were in the planning stages or only partially implemented a year ago have now been fully implemented.

Major recommendations from the AB 1609 study and the Year 4 Evaluation Report include the following:

1. Restarting the exam with the Class of 2006 provides some opportunities for improvement; however, careful consideration should be given to any changes that are implemented.
2. CDE and SBE should continue to monitor and encourage efforts by districts and schools to implement effective standards-based instruction.
3. Professional development for teachers is a significant opportunity for improvement.

**Summary of Key Issue(s)**

4. SBE might consider other ways that students could demonstrate mastery of the content standards and the California Legislature might consider state-wide options for recognizing levels of achievement below that required for a diploma.
5. Further consideration of CAHSEE requirements for special education students is needed, in light of the low passing rates for this group. Apparent disparities between racial and ethnic groups within the special education population require further investigation.

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**Fiscal Analysis (as appropriate)**

Presentation of the report to the Legislature has no direct fiscal impact on school districts.

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**Attachment(s)**

None.